others. It was unanimously agreed that there must by systemic reforms to eliminate exam-related stress. It was also felt that a national consensus on the issue should be reached through wider discussion.

In the context of review of the National Curriculum Framework, a National Steering Group has been constituted by NCERT under the chairmanship of Prof. Yashpal, which is being facilitated by 21 National Focus Groups. One of the Focus Group will address the issue of carrying out public examination reforms.

The Standing Committee of the IIT Council in a meeting held on the 5th March, 2005 discussed the issue of stress caused by the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and the mushrooming of coaching institutes. It was decided that IIT Directors will come out with concrete proposals for bringing out reforms in the JEE.

In pursuance of the decision taken in the meeting, the Council of Boards of School Education in India (COBSE) is organizing a one day conference on the 1st May, 2005 of the chairmen of the School Education Boards to deliberate further and evolve a national consensus on this issue. Once the national consensus is reached, the process of examination reforms will be initiated before the conduct of the 2006 examinations.

SCs/STs/OBCs Judges

*435. SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are applying the principle of social justice in appointment of constitutional posts such as judges of High Courts and Supreme Court of India; and

(b) if so, the ratio of representations given to SCs, STs, OBCs, women and minorities in the existing strength of the High Courts/Supreme Court?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) Appointments of Judges of the Supreme Court of India and High Courts are made under articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution of India, respectively, which do not provide for reservation for any caste or class of persons. No statistics is, therefore, maintained for number of Judges belonging to SC/ST/OBCs and minorities. There are, however, one woman

Judge in the Supreme Court and 26 women Judges in the High Courts.

The Government have, however, addressed letters to the Chief Ministers of the States and the Chief Justices of the High Courts, from time to time, requesting them to locate persons from the Bar belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other Backward Classes, Minorities and amongst Women who are suitable for appointment as High Court Judges.

Claim over Taj Mahal

*436. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had received any demand from the Government of UP for handing over the charge of Taj Mahal to Wakf Board;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Questions do not arise.

Objectives of the ICDS

*437. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite full utilisation of funds allocated under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), a large number of children under the age of five die every month due to malnutrition while the main aim of ICDS is to lower the infant mortality;

(b) if so, whether Government have looked into the working of ICDS and if so, the outcome thereof; and

(c) whether Government have identified the factors responsible for failure of the ICDS and the details of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to improve ICDS and to bring down infant mortality rate?